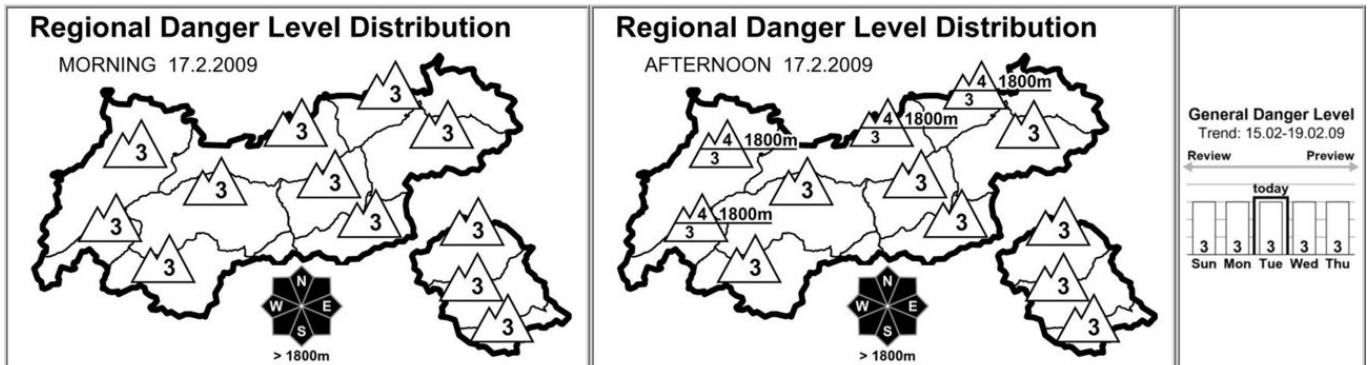


Avalanche Bulletin

of the Avalanche Warning Service Tyrol

Tuesday, 17.02.2009, at 07:30



TREACHEROUS AVALANCHE SITUATION: ESCALATING DANGER DUE TO SNOWFALL AND WIND

AVALANCHE DANGER

The avalanche situation in Tyrol is treacherous, the danger is considerable widespread. In the regions with lots of new snow along the Northern Alps, the danger could reach the level "high" this afternoon. Avalanche prone locations are to be found on steep slopes in all aspects, mostly above approximately 1800 m. Avalanches can be triggered even by minimum additional loading and the danger will become even more acute in the course of the day. Backcountry skiing and freeriding tours in outlying terrain away from secured ski runs make experience in assessing the hazards imperative; touring possibilities are limited. During the day, the danger of naturally triggered avalanches will rise, which could place exposed transportation routes and ascents to huts at risk.

SNOW LAYERING

Last night it began to snow far and wide, but the major thrust of precipitation is expected to arrive during the day today. There are trigger sensitive layers embedded inside the snowpack which could serve as bed surfaces for avalanches: on shady slopes there is often surface hoar, on sunny slopes there are faceted, loosely packed snow crystals beneath the melt freeze crust. New snow and strong northwesterly winds will give rise to many new snowdrift accumulations in the course of the day. Freshly formed and older snowdrift accumulations are in general poorly bonded with the old snowpack. Due to the weak layers inside the old snowpack, the likelihood of triggering avalanches is quite high.

ALPINE WEATHER FORECAST (ZAMG-WEATHER SERVICE INNSBRUCK)

General weather conditions: a powerful low pressure zone will sweep over Tyrol from the north today. In its wake, an intermediate high will follow. However, the northerly airstream will remain with us until Saturday and continue to provide cold, intermittently also moist air masses, which will bring very little additional snowfall in the next few days. Mountain weather today: unfavourable conditions. Poor visibility due to fog and heavy snowfall, most intense in the Northern Alps. Great heed should be paid to the current avalanche bulletin in such conditions. Between the Ortler and the Dolomites, it will remain dry for longer, with occasional bright spells. Strong northwesterly winds. Temperature at 2000 m: minus 8 degrees during the day, dropping to minus 18 degrees during the night; at 3000 m: minus 13 to minus 17 degrees, during the night it will drop to well below minus 20 degrees.

SHORT TERM DEVELOPMENT

Critical touring conditions continue, with considerable avalanche danger widespread.

Rudi Mair

Translated by Jeffrey McCabe